

SUMMARY

STATE AGENCIES' ACTION PLAN STATUS REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

Overview

The *State Agencies' Action Plan* identified specific salmon recovery activities planned for the 1999-2001 biennium. This document summarizes the agencies' progress on the first year of the Action Plan. Additionally, status of some actions were updated to reflect progress made through December 2000.

The Action Plan emphasis is on new activities or modifications to existing ones to provide additional protection for salmon. The activities implemented were collectively targeted to: strengthen state guidance and regulatory tools; take actions in high priority areas; provide technical and financial support to local groups involved in salmon recovery; and develop/implement outreach and education efforts and monitoring tools.

It is important to note that some activities planned earlier in the biennium were not initiated or there was limited progress. For example, a supplemental budget was not approved until May 2000. Initiative 695 resulted in spending and hiring freezes within the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Also, some actions under the Forests and Fish Agreement were approved by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board in mid fiscal year.

To achieve measurable improvements and progress toward salmon recovery the Joint Natural Resources Cabinet produced in May 2000 the Salmon Recovery Scorecard. It will be used in the future to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the State Agencies' Action Plan.

Below are highlights of the state agencies' collective accomplishments and progress. The complete status report is attached in a matrix format.

Agricultural Activities

- Set up and supported the Agriculture, Fish and Water process – a collaborative effort between state and federal agencies, and the agriculture community, with some participation by environmental groups and tribes to address on-farm and irrigation practices.
- Participated in negotiations of on-farm conservation practices standards – focus to date has been on drainage ditches and dikes.
- Guidance document for comprehensive irrigation plans is near completion – final draft to be available for public review in December 2000.
- The Conservation Commission signed up landowners in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) – 35 contracts covering 600 acres are in place, with another 100 pending contracts.

Forests and Fish Agreement

- The Forest Practices Board adopted, in January 2000, emergency rules addressing several provisions of the Forests and Fish Report.
- Negotiated and received ESA protection for the Forests and Fish agreement from NMFS in the 4(d) rule published in July 2000.
- Prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Forests and Fish Report. Final EIS is expected in spring 2001.
- The Small Forest Landowner Office (SFLO) has been established and staffed within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).
- The Commissioner of Public Lands established an advisory committee for the Small Forest Landowner Office and DNR.
- The advisory committee and DNR developed rules to implement the Forest Riparian Easement Program. The rules were adopted in spring 2000.
- Legislature appropriated \$2.5 million in fiscal year 2001 for the Forest Riparian Easement Program. Several applications for easements are being processed.
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Department of Ecology (Ecology), and DNR, hired staff to implement on-the-ground activities required by the Forests and Fish Agreement, including enforcement.
- DNR has initiated a review of how the Forests and Fish Agreement emergency rules are working on the ground.

Land Use Activities

- Ecology adopted revised shoreline management guidelines rule on November 27, 2000. The guidelines allow local governments to pick one of two paths when updating their shoreline master programs. One path was negotiated with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). It contains specific measures for protecting shorelines. Any local master program that complies with the negotiated path will automatically get an exception under the ESA.
- Department of Community Trade and Economic Development (CTED) adopted, in July 2000, a rule on administrative guidelines for use of Best Available Science by local governments.
- Ecology revised the guidebook for Comprehensive Planning for flood Hazard Management. A final draft will be completed by the end of year 2000.
- Developed an Alternative Mitigation Policy Guidance as required by the 1998 Salmon Recovery Act. The Directors of WDFW, WSDOT, and Ecology signed the policy guidance in February 2000.
- Ecology published incentive guidance document – Applying the Public Benefit Rating System - A Watershed Action Tool and an update of Exploring Wetlands Stewardship. Both documents were distributed to local governments and other stewardship practitioners.
- Reviewed and commented on several proposed Critical Area Ordinances, Shoreline Master Programs revisions, and flood plain enhancement projects.
- Provided wetland technical assistance and training to staff from state agencies, local governments, and private industry.

- WDFW restored 200 acres of estuarine wetlands in Whatcom County through the federal Wetlands Reserve Program, and restored wetlands on WDFW lands.
- Ecology provided technical assistance and funding support to two local wetland preservation efforts in Snohomish and Pierce Counties.
- Several agencies implemented actions to prevent and control the spread of aquatic nuisance species (e.g. began regulating ballast water and expanded the aquatic plant quarantine list).

Urban Stormwater Activities

- Ecology worked with a stormwater advisory committee to develop a draft stormwater management plan and recommendations to the legislature – draft plan expected in December 2000, with final in June 2001.
- Draft stormwater technical manual for Western Washington was issued in August 2000. The final manual will be issued in January 2001.
- Puget Sound Water Quality Action Team (PSAT) developed draft amendments to the Puget Sound Stormwater Plan. Adoption of the Plan is scheduled for January 2001.

Water Quantity and Instream Flow

- WDFW and Ecology prioritized watersheds targeted for flow establishment, identified in the Statewide Strategy to Recover Salmon.
- Conducted and participated in instream flow studies in Lower Columbia tributaries, the Walla Walla, Skagit, Samish, Quilcene, Methow, and Entiat rivers and tributaries, as well as southeast Washington streams and Wenatchee tributaries. Developing recommendations on instream flows with local participation.
- Draft instream flow rule for the lower Skagit River was prepared by Ecology with local consultation. The draft rule is undergoing public review. Adoption is planned for March 2001.
- Intense efforts involving several agencies are ongoing in the Methow Basin to address instream flow needs and salmon recovery. A Memorandum of Agreement is in development.
- Local entities in the Methow, Dungeness, Walla Walla, Yakima, and other basins are working on flow restoration.
- Negotiated water purchase/lease agreements totalling \$420,000 that will return water to the Methow, and Walla Walla basins. Additional, negotiations are underway in the Yakima, Okanogan, and Methow basins.
- A variety of actions have resulted in significant water savings and efficiencies. Currently there are 22 active water conservation projects underway.
- Seven reclaimed water projects were constructed and in use. Three more projects are under construction, seven are in the planning phase and 17 are in the study phase.

Water Quality

- Water quality standards (temperature) are being revised by Ecology – public review is underway, rule adoption is expected in spring/summer 2001.
- The Water Quality Management Plan to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution was completed in January 2000 and approved by EPA in February 2000.

- Ecology developed 56 water cleanup plans (known as TMDLs) during fiscal year 2000.
- Worked cooperatively with the irrigation districts in the Yakima basin to successfully reduce the turbidity by 25% in selected irrigation return flows. Approved a loan for \$10 million, for fiscal year 2001, to the Roza irrigation district for water quality improvements.
- Awarded over \$3.3 million in grants to conservation districts to assist farmers, irrigators and private landowners with implementation of Best Management Practices.
- Combined and integrated the requirements of TMDLs under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) under ESA for Simpson Timber. This is the first CWA/ESA integration project in the nation.

Fish Passage Barriers

- WDFW inventoried and prioritized fish passage barriers for correction on WSDOT roads. There are approximately 2,300 WSDOT-owned fish passage barriers (not all need to be fixed).
- Inventoried fish passage barriers and inadequately screened irrigation diversions on some of WDFW lands. Passage problems on all WDFW lands are estimated at 1,000.
- WDFW updated fish passage database. It contains 10,500 culvert records with about 2,000 barriers to fix. The database is available for use by other barrier inventory groups.
- Provided grants to local groups to inventory and correct barriers.

Harvest and Hatchery Management Actions

- State and tribal managers completed a draft harvest plan in consultation with NMFS in November 2000. It is the basis of a 4(d) rule exemption to cover 2001 fisheries developed through the North of Falcon process.
- Commercial selective harvest gear has been manufactured and is being tested with tribal fishers in Puget Sound. Testing with non-tribal fishers in Willapa Bay is scheduled.
- WDFW completed Hatchery and Genetic Management Plans required for ESA compliance for the Puget Sound chinook. Plans for steelhead on the Columbia River are near completion.
- Supported and participated in the activities of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group created in May 2000.
- A review of juveniles and adult fish passage problems at hatchery facilities has been compiled. Also, monitored water effluents from hatcheries to detect water quality problems.
- 32 million hatchery coho were mass marked by fin clipping, representing nearly all of the coho production in the state. Volunteers and Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEGs) have marked approximately 1 million fish.
- 30 million hatchery chinook were mass marked in the Puget Sound in agreement with several tribes. In the future the number is expected to be higher as more agreements are reached with the tribes.

Hydropower and Dams Operation

- Reviewed 127 major projects and negotiated/recommended substantial improvements on 22 of these projects. Also participated in implementation of mitigation measures on 36 already-negotiated projects.
- Negotiated and signed agreements to improve fish passage, flows and riparian habitat on the Cowlitz River (Cowlitz Hydropower project), to remove Condit dam on the White Salmon River, and to remove Simpson Timber Company dam on Goldsborough Creek. Also assisted private landowners in Skamania County to improve fish passage at Duncan dam.

Education and Outreach

- Secured federal funding from National Service (AmeriCorps) to support the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) salmon recovery initiative. WCC crews restored and enhanced 34.3 miles of salmon streams and riparian corridors.
- WCC trained and coordinated volunteers in watershed restoration work. A total of 3,750 volunteers provided over 16,500 hours from July 1999 through March 2000.
- Supported the 12 Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEGs) by funding volunteer coordinators. The RFEGs have carried out 76 projects since January 2000.
- Awarded nine Public Information and Education (PIE) contracts for local salmon-related public involvement and education efforts.
- Expanded partnership with Tri-County through Salmon Information Television Network and participated in funding and producing video program.

Compliance and Enforcement

- Deployed three new detachments to enforce fishing regulations in marine waters.
- Completed all scheduled Pacific Fisheries Management Council enforcement patrols for selective fisheries in 2000.
- Initiated fish passage/screening compliance checks in Methow and Walla Walla basins. Developed cooperative compliance plans with non-compliant landowners.
- Dedicated four enforcement officers to Habitat Approval Project (HPA) compliance monitoring, technical assistance to landowners and prosecution of non-compliance.
- Inspected over 93 nonpoint pollution sites. Took formal actions on three polluters and signed partnering contracts with 64. The actions prompted several property owners to work with their local conservation districts to develop and implement farm plans.
- Took enforcement actions against illegal water use activities involving golf courses, agriculture irrigation, and inappropriate use of exempt wells.
- Selected the Skagit, Dungeness, Methow and Walla Walla basins to plan joint Ecology and WDFW compliance efforts. Plans are underdevelopment.

Permit Streamlining

- Working to develop an Integrated Stream Corridor Guidebook with several habitat protection and restoration guidelines.
- Completed the Integrated Streambank Protection Guidelines section of the guidebook. Currently available on WDFW website as a work in progress. They are used by

NMFS as example of guidelines to use for habitat protection and restoration (referenced in the 4(d) rule).

- Several scientists developed nine discussion (white) papers addressing other habitat protection and restoration guidelines. Workshops were held to discuss the white papers. Drafts are currently available and final papers are due in March 2001. See www.wa.gov/wdfw/hab/salguide/salguide.htm.
- Implemented interim action for the HPA program to prevent further harm to listed species, consistent with Memorandum of Agreement with NMFS and USFWS.
- Reviewed the Hydraulic Code rules, technical manuals, and guidelines. Distributed the first draft rule section for public comments, with four more sections to follow.
- Completed EIS scoping for a programmatic take exemption document. Preparing alternatives including development of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).
- Prepared and submitted about 160 document (e.g. biological assessments) to NMFS and USFWS and negotiated compliance for several federally funded transportation projects. Assisted local agencies with the same activity.
- Developed road maintenance manual and maps and coordinated with Tri-County road maintenance activities. The manual is pending review by NMFS and inclusion in the 4(d) rule.

Science and Monitoring Activities

- In May 2000 the Independent Science Panel released Report 2000-1: Review of Statewide Strategy to Recover Salmon: Extinction is not an Option.
- On January 12, 2000 the Independent Science Panel issued Technical Memorandum 2000-1: Preliminary review of issues regarding development of a statewide salmonid recovery monitoring program. The Panel is working on a monitoring report due at the end of December 2000.
- Finalized in May 2000 the Salmon Recovery Scorecard – a performance management tool for agencies to measure their progress on salmon recovery indicators.
- The 2000 Puget Sound Update was published in March 2000. It describes the condition of the Puget Sound environment in the late 1990s.
- Began the update of the Salmonid Stock Inventory (SaSI). Fish stock distribution is linked to the Salmon and Steelhead Information and Assessment Project (SSHIAP) stream reaches. A cutthroat SaSI document was produced.
- Data collection has begun for SSHIAP salmon habitat variables in Southwest Washington WRIs 24-30 and in estuarine/nearshore marine areas.
- Expanded the smolt monitoring program to include seven new stream systems (total 51 stream systems within 19 WRIs), expanding monitoring of ESA listed species.
- All Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) funded salmon project data has been collected in the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) PRISM database, and is accessible to all interested parties via the Internet.
- Inventory of nearshore habitat has been conducted and is now available for Whatcom, Skagit, and part of Island counties. The data for the entire marine/estuarine shoreline will be available in January 2001.

Regional Assistance

- Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) provided approximately \$32 million (194 projects) in the first round of the grant cycle.
- SRFB has established criteria and grant guidelines for the “Second Round 2000” grant cycle. Lead Entities submitted lists of projects for funding on or before October 30, 2000. These lists have been reviewed by a scientific group. Funding decisions will be made January 2001.
- Assisted lead entities with scientific review and submittal of restoration proposals to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB).
- Provided on-going assistance to Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, Tri-County (Puget Sound), and Upper Columbia region.
- Assisted locals in developing responses to ESA listings for Puget Sound chinook, Hood Canal summer chum and for the Lower Columbia listed species.
- Assigned watershed stewardship teams comprised of biologists and species specialists to support the 23 Lead Entities and others as needed.
- Supported the activities of 40 planning units engaged in watershed planning. Eleven of the 40 WRIAs are in critical, over-appropriated basins.
- Guidance documents for statewide watershed assessment and watershed conservation planning are under development. Outreach to local watershed groups is underway.
- Seventeen Limiting Factors Analysis reports are complete, 11 more are under development, and 12 WRIAs not yet initiated.
- Reviewed and approved projects submitted by 12 Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEGs). Volunteers working with RFEGs contributed over 66,000 hours.